

**CITY OF MIAMI BEACH**  
**Office of the City Manager**  
**Letter to Commission No. 109-2005**



**To:** Mayor David Dermer and  
Members of the City Commission

**Date:** April 28, 2005

**From:** Jorge M. Gonzalez  
City Manager

**Subject:** **STATUS OF BAY LINK PROJECT**

The purpose of the LTC is to provide you the latest status update on the Bay Link Project:

On January 27, 2005, the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization Governing Board (MPO Board) did not accommodate the City of Miami Beach's request to re-rank the Bay Link Project from a Priority III to Priority I for funding and construction. As a result, the following have taken place:

- The Bay Link Project remained listed as Priority III in the Miami-Dade 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), for construction in 2016-2020;
- The Bay Link Project was not submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for consideration as a "New Start" project;
- The MPO Board refused to allocate 2005 funds to conduct the PE/FEIS phase of Bay Link, as too premature; and
- The consulting contract between the MPO and Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas was not renewed.

During the same meeting, the MPO Board approved the Pro Forma which re-affirmed and supported the following mass transit segments as Priority I projects:

1. The Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) to Earlington Heights Connection: This 2.6 mile heavy rail project, which will connect the airport to Downtown Miami, is locally funded and its final design phase is anticipated to begin in April 2005;
2. The North Corridor: This 9.5-mile heavy rail project will begin at NW 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue (MLK Metrorail Station) and end at the Broward County corporate limits. The North Corridor Project was previously submitted for FTA consideration as a New Start project, but was "Not Rated" by FTA due to serious concerns regarding the project's justification criteria and cost effectiveness. Nevertheless, the North Corridor advocates continued to lobby for the project, and a revised version of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is scheduled for submission to FTA by

June-July 2005. A Record of Decision from FTA is anticipated before the end of 2005;

3. The MIC-FIU segment of the East-West Corridor: This 10.1-mile heavy rail project will connect the MIC to the Florida International University (FIU) and the Florida Turnpike. Its PE/FEIS phase began on January 18, 2005.

For planning purposes, the following opportunities to resubmit the City's request to the MPO Board for reprioritization of the Bay Link Project may materialize in the future, if:

- o The North Corridor FEIS is not well received by FTA and remains as a "Not Rated" New Start project;
- o The City of Miami, which is moving forward to implement its Downtown Streetcar project (utilizing City of Miami funds), requests that Miami Beach submit to the MPO its official request for the re-ranking of the Bay Link connection to Downtown Miami;
- o A Bay Link re-ranking request is submitted during the regular update process of the Miami-Dade LRTP, which is due to resume three to five years from now. The exact update year will be determined by the upcoming Federal Transportation Bill.

The proposed South Florida East Coast (SFEC) Corridor Project, utilizing the existing 85-mile FEC rail corridor from Downtown Miami to Jupiter, has gained momentum in South Florida and may directly affect existing local rail project priorities. The required preliminary study for this tri-county project, known as "SFEC Corridor Transit Analysis Study," is estimated to cost \$6 million, or \$2 million per county. The MPO Governing Boards of Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach have recently approved their respective \$2 million shares of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CM) funds required for the study to proceed. The Transit Analysis Study will be performed by Gannett Fleming under FDOT District 4 (Broward-Palm Beach) management, and is scheduled to begin in late May 2005.

The SFEC Corridor Project has been heavily promoted by key officials in Miami, Broward and Palm Beach Counties, and will ultimately compete for the same limited pot of federal, state, and local transportation funds.

Please contact me if you have any concerns or questions.

JMG/JG/PM/FB/FV/aj

- c: Robert Middaugh, Assistant City Manager  
Tim Hemstreet, Acting Assistant City Manager  
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